96

ANTIQUITIES
SACRED and PROFANE:
OR, A
COLLECTION
OF
Curious and Critical DISSERTATIONS
ON THE
Old and New Teſtament.

Neceſſary for all thoſe who deſire to have a thorough Knowledge of the HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Done into ENGLISH *from the* FRENCH, *with Notes, by a Clergyman of the Church of* England.

Illuſtrated with COPPER PLATES.

We muſt not be carried away with a Notion, that the firſt Interpreters of the Holy Bible have left no room for new Diſcoveries, or that it is impoſſible to clear up thoſe Difficulties which have not as yet been explained. In Matters of this Nature we ought not to be byaſs'd by AUTHORITY *and* NUMBERS. *The Majority of Commentators take the eaſieſt Courſe, and the eaſieſt Courſe is to copy after others, and take what they ſay for granted. But let a Man carefully examine one ſingle Chapter, and he'll ſoon be convinced how much the Inſpired Writings ſtand in need of ſome farther Illuſtrations.*

CALMET. Gen. Pref.

LONDON;
Printed for J. ROBERTS, near the *Oxford-Arms*, in *Warwick-lane*; S. WILMOT, in *Oxford*; and C. CROWNFIELD, in *Cambridge*. M.DCC.XXIV.

395 Hb. 1. 4

To the Honourable

Sir *Charles Wager*, K^t.

One of the

Lords Commiſſioners of the Admiralty,

THESE

TRANSLATIONS

Are humbly Dedicated.

THE PREFACE.

IT *will be neceſſary, for the Reader's Satisfaction, to give a ſhort Account of theſe Diſſertations.* Father Calmet, *of the Order of St.* Benedict, *publiſhed at* Paris, *in the Year* 1707. *in twenty Volumes in* Quarto, A Literal Commentary in *French* upon all the Books of the Old and New Teſtament. *A ſecond Edition came out in* 1715, *and there is now in the Preſs a third Edition, printing by* Subſcription, *in eight Volumes in* Folio. *So many Editions, in a few Years, of ſo voluminous a Work, are infallible Signs of the univerſal Approbation this learned and excellent Comment has met with; and indeed it is no wonder, ſince it contains all that is neceſſary for a clear and thorough Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.*

The moſt difficult and important Matters, which could not be fully explained in the Body of the Comment, without running it out to an immoderate Length,

are

are diſcuſſed and cleared up in diſtinct and ſeparate Diſcourſes. Theſe Diſcourſes are the Life and Soul of the whole, and are exceeding curious and uſeful, being a Treaſure *of the* Hebrew, Greek, Roman, *&c. Literature. For this Reaſon they were all extracted and printed by themſelves at* Paris *in three Volumes in* Quarto, *for the ſake of thoſe who are not willing or able to go to the great Price of the whole Work, and yet would be very glad to reap the Benefit and Advantage of the Light theſe learned Diſſertations afford.*

The Edition of theſe Diſcourſes met with the ſame Succeſs as thoſe of the compleat Commentary, and notwithſtanding the great Number of the Copies that were printed, they were all in a manner ſold off in a very little time: and therefore they are now publiſhing at Amſterdam, *in* Octavo, *a ſecond Edition; in which the Diſſertations are ranged under General Heads, and thoſe that treat of the ſame Subjects follow one another in their natural Order.*

The Tranſlator has thought fit to follow the Amſterdam *Edition in this Particular, and you will find, immediately after this Preface, a Table of the General Heads to which all the Diſſertations are referred.*

Father Calmet *has lately publiſhed, as a Supplement to his Commentary,* A Critical, *&c.* Dictionary of the Holy Bible, *in two Volumes in* Folio; *from whence all the new and uſeful Diſſertations ſhall be extracted, and inſerted under their proper Heads.*

A TABLE OF THE General HEADS, to which all the DISSERTATIONS are referred.

I. Poetry and Muſick.

THE *Poetry and Muſick of the Antients, particularly of the* Hebrews. *Their Muſical Inſtruments, with Cuts.*

II. The Book of Pſalms.

Their Encomium, &c. *Author of the Collection,* &c. *Subject and Deſign,* &c. *Prophecies of the Meſſiah. Obſcurity. Method of explaining. By whom compoſed,* &c. *The Text and antient Verſions,* &c. *Titles.* Lamnatſeah. Selah. *The* 15 *Pſalms of Degrees. A Table of the Pſalms in the order of Time they were written,* &c.

III. Several Theological Points.

The Form of the Books and Way of Writing among the Antients. Inſpiration. Whether Ezra *the Author or Editor only of the Bible. Whether he changed the old* Hebrew *for the* Chaldean *Letters,* &c. *Whether the Lawgivers and Philoſophers of old had their Laws and Rules of Morality from the Scriptures,* &c. *Concerning* John v. 7. There are three, *&c. &c. &c.*

IV. Miracles.

True and falſe Miracles. Power of Demons. Paſſage thro' the Red-Sea, *&c. Apparition of* Samuel, *&c. Metamorphoſis of* Nebuchadnezzar. *The Fiſh that ſwallowed* Jonas. *The charming of Serpents,* Pſal. l. 5. *&c.*

V. *Jewiſh* Ceremonies.

Original and Antiquity of Circumciſion, &c. *Baptiſm of the* Jews. *Of* John *the Baptiſt. Of Jeſus Chriſt,* &c. *Elections by Lot,* &c. &c.

VI. The Civil and Military Government of the *Jews.*

The Civil Polity and Methods of adminiſtring Publick Juſtice. The Sanhedrim.

hedrim. The ſeveral Puniſhments that occur in Scripture, &c. &c. *Whether any Executioners. Military State. Employments at the Court and in the Army. The* Rechabites, *&c. &c.*

VII. Money.

Antiquity of Coin. Value of Hebrew *Money. Meaſures of the* Hebrews, *&c. The Riches* David *left* Solomon, *&c.*

VIII. Laws relating to Marriage.

Marriages of the Hebrews. *Divorce. Vow of* Jephta. *Relation between the* Jews *and* Lacedemonians, *&c.*

IX. Diſeaſes.

The Phyſick and Phyſicians of the antient Hebrews. *Their Food*, &c. *Habits. Funerals. Nature, Cauſes, and Effects of the Leproſy.* Job's *Diſeaſe*, &c. &c.

X. Chronology.

The Years, Months, Hours, of the Chaldeans, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Hebrews. Daniel's *ſeventy Weeks*, &c. *St.* Peter's *Journey to* Rome. *Chronological Tables of the Kings of* Aſſyria, Perſia, Chaldæa, Media, *Monarchy of the* Greeks *in the* Eaſt. Aſmonæan *Princes. High Prieſts of the* Jews, *&c. &c.*

XI. Hiſtory.

The Excellency of the Hiſtory of the Hebrews *above that of any other Nation. Of the neighbouring Nations of the* Jews, *the* Philiſtines, Phœnicians, Idumæans, Moabites, *&c. &c. A Summary of the Hiſtory of the* Eaſtern *Nations from* Solomon *to the* Babyloniſh *Captivity*, &c. &c. &c.

XII. Geography.

A Map of the Land of Promiſe, with Remarks. The antient Abode of the Hebrews, *&c. The Land of* Ophir. *The Country to which the ten Tribes were tranſported*, &c. *Where they are at this time*, &c. &c. &c.

XIII. Genealogy.

St. Matthew *and St.* Luke *reconciled. The Order and Succeſſion of the High Prieſts*, &c. &c.

XIV. The Religious State of the *Jews.*

The State of Religion in Judah *and* Iſrael *after their Separation. The* Phariſees, Sadducees, Herodians, Eſſenes, *&c. &c.*

XV. The Religion and Deities of the Heathens.

The Original of Idolatry. The Temples of the Antients. The Idolatry of the Iſraelites *in the Wilderneſs, of the God* Rephan *or* Remphan. *The Original and Gods of the* Philiſtines, Aſtaroth, Beelzebub, *&c. The Gods of the* Phœnicians *or* Canaannites. Baal. Aſtaroth. Adonis. *Of* Molock *the God of the* Ammonites, *of the Gods of the* Moabites, Baal-peor, *&c. Good and bad Angels. The Demon* Aſmodæus. Naaman's *Petition to bow before* Rimmon. *The Inſcription on the Altar of* Athens, *To the unknown God.*

A

DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

POETRY

IN GENERAL,

And concerning that of the HEBREWS in Particular.

By Mr. ABBOT *FLEURY.*

MR. Abbot Fleury *compoſed this Diſcourſe ſeveral Years ago, with a Deſign to inſert it in a Treatiſe concerning the Poetry of the Antients, which he had then Thoughts of publiſhing. He has ſince been pleas'd to communicate it to me, with leave to impart it to the Publick.*

I have likewiſe given my Sentiments of the Hebrew *Poetry, in a Diſſertation made on purpoſe for that end, and which immediately follows this.*

AS there are certain Times and Circumſtances, wherein it is natural for Men to *run* or *dance*, to *ſing* or *cry out*, tho' ſuch kinds of Sounds and Motions are in themſelves neither *The Original of Poetry.*

the eaſieſt nor moſt ſimple; ſo likewiſe ſtrong and lively Paſſions cauſe Men to break out into a Language, which ſeems to cool and ſedate Tempers unnatural and affected, inaſmuch as it abounds more with Exaggerations, Compariſons, bold Figures, and pompous Words, than the common Forms of Speech. Again, the ſame Principle that excites Men to *ſing*, puts them upon meaſuring their Words, in order to make them run the more ſmooth and tuneable, by obſerving the Quantity and Number of the Syllables, their Sound and Harmony, and the Cadence or Cloſe that from time to time is to make its Returns. This is what gives birth to Verſes and Couplets, as lofty and figurative Expreſſions are the diſtinguiſhing Marks of the Poetick Style. Hence therefore it is no more ſtrange to find, in all Ages, and among all Nations, Verſes and Poetry of one ſort or another, than it is to find that they ſing and dance; the former being ſo ſteady a Conſequence of the latter, that even the moſt barbarous Nations are no Exceptions in this Caſe. The Antients obſerved that the *Gauls* and *Germans* had their Muſick and Poetry; and we find the ſame Things, at this very day, among the Negroes, the *Iroquois*, and the Inhabitants of the *Caribby Iſlands*.

Improved firſt by the Eaſtern *Nations.*

As the *Eaſtern* Nations were naturally of a refined Temper and lively Paſſions, and as they were the People of the World the firſt civilized, ſo were they the firſt who cultivated and improved by Art this innate Inclination to Muſick and Poetry. The *Egyptians* and *Syrians* are thoſe whom the *Greeks* have left us the fulleſt Accounts of. There is ſtill extant among the *Greek* Poets an Hymn on the Death of *Adonis* (*a*), which ſeems

Syrians.

to be an Imitation of that in the Prophet *Ezekiel* (*b*), and which undoubtedly, as well as the whole Fable, is originally *Syrian*. And the Threatning of God, in the ſame Prophet (*c*), to cauſe the Noiſe of their Songs to ceaſe, and the Sound of their Harps to be no more heard at *Tyre*; and his commanding, in the Prophet *Iſaiah* (*d*), the *Tyrian* Harlots to take their Harps, and go about the City, ſinging many Songs, and making Melody; are manifeſt Proofs how much Muſick was in vogue there.

(*a*) Theocritus *and* Bion.
(*b*) Ezekiel viii. 14. Adonis *the ſame as* Tammuz.
(*c*) Ezekiel xxvi. 13.
(*d*) Iſaiah xxiii. 16.

As

As for the *Egyptians*, *Plato* informs us (*a*), that Musick, (under which he comprehends Poetry) was not only of a very long standing among them, but that they had the highest Regard imaginable for it, as being a Part of their Religion and Laws. He says, they consecrated to certain Deities all manner of Songs and Dances, prescribing the Days and Ceremonies to be for ever inviolably observed by all; and in case any Change or Innovation was attempted, the Priests and Priestesses were to call in the Assistance of the Secular Arm, and immediately put a stop to it; and the Attempter, unless he submitted, was to be looked upon all his Life after as a profane and irreligious Person. *Held in great Veneration by the* Egyptians.

Of all the antient *Oriental* Writings none but those of the *Hebrews* have reached our Times, and consequently we can form a Judgment of no Poetry but of theirs only. Now all the Remains we have of the *Hebrew* Poetry are in the Holy Scriptures, where we find that the *Hebrews* likewise made use of this Art in their Religious Worship; and altho' they might have also their Profane Poetry, yet is it plain that their Notions in this Matter were the same with those of the *Egyptians*, whether the *Egyptians* had them from the *Hebrews*, or whether they were derived to both from one common Fountain. It is very probable, that it was held in the same Veneration by all the other Nations of the first Ages of the World: for the *Grecian* Worship in particular was made up in a great measure of their Poetry, which was looked upon as Sacred and Divine at its first Appearance among them. *By the* Hebrews *and others.*

All the Poetical Works in the Holy Scriptures are either Psalms or Hymns, to express the various Sentiments and Affections of the Mind, or Collections of Moral Sentences to instruct Men in their Duty. The largest and most antient of these Works is the Book of *Job*, composed of both the forementioned Particulars; for as the main Scope and Design of it is this great and important Point of Morality, That God sometimes afflicts good Men, not to punish them, but to exercise and brighten their Virtues; so likewise the Sentiments and Maxims that relate to the Justice of God, and the Methods of his Providence; to the Reward of Virtue, and Punishment of Vice; to an entire Resignation to the Divine Will, and the Peace and Security of a good Conscience, are fully handled; and moreover, the *The Poetical Works of Scripture.* Job.

(*a*) Plato, lib. 2. de Legib.

Affliction of *Job*, and the Indignation of his three Friends, are drawn to the Life.

The Proverbs *and the* Pſalms.

The *Proverbs* of *Solomon* are nothing elſe but ſo many Rules of Moral Duty, as are ſeveral of the *Pſalms*. But theſe laſt, for the moſt part, as well as all the Songs or Hymns, that are diſperſed up and down the Holy Scriptures, expreſs the Affections of the Mind towards God or towards Man. Thoſe that are addreſſed to God, are either to adore, laud, and magnify his moſt Holy Name, or to render him Thanks for all his Benefits, or to ask Pardon and Forgiveneſs for paſt Offences, or to implore ſome future Temporal or Spiritual Bleſſing. Theſe are the Subjects of the greateſt part of theſe Sacred Hymns; the reſt are employ'd in expreſſing the Paſſions of Grief, Joy, Indignation, Hatred, and the like, whoſe Object is either the Perſon ſpeaking, or other Men repreſented generally under the Character of the Righteous or Wicked.

Scripture-Poetry very noble and ſublime.

Poetry ſo full of moving and affecting Sentiments, muſt of Courſe, as to its Figures and Expreſſions, be very noble and ſublime; if it be true that the Energy or Force of Figures, and true Sublimity of Style, are the natural Effects of the Paſſions. Accordingly we find this to be the great and diſtinguiſhing Beauty of the *Hebrew* Poetry; in this point no Poetry excels, if any equals, it. All is figurative, and the Figures are very often and ſuddenly changed, and not only the Figures, but the Perſons alſo who are ſpeaking, frequently and inſenſibly vary.

One while it is the Prophet, another while it is God himſelf; now again it is the Righteous Man or the Sinner that ſpeaks, ſometimes a Voice and Utterance are given even to inanimate Things, as Rocks, and Mountains, and Rivers, and the like. The Majeſty of God is diſplay'd under ſtrong and lively Images; he is repreſented as ſitting upon the Cherubims, and riding upon the Wings of the Wind; at his Wrath the Earth ſhakes and trembles, at his Rebuke the Foundations of the World are diſcovered. The Similes and Alluſions are thick ſown, and are all taken from Things obvious and familiar to thoſe for whom they were written; for the Palm-Trees and Cedars, the Lions and Eagles, ſo frequently alluded to, were Things well known to the Inhabitants of *Paleſtine*. For this Reaſon we muſt not, from our Notions of Things, judge of the other Compariſons which appear to us leſs noble and beautiful; neither are we to imagine

imagine that every Word and Circumſtance of a Similitude are to be applied, the Reſemblance generally falls upon ſome one ſingle Circumſtance, and the reſt are added, not as Parts of the Compariſon, but to give ſome agreeable and natural Image of the Thing from whence the Compariſon is taken: *Thy Teeth are as a Flock of Sheep which go up from the waſhing, whereof every one beareth Twins, and there is not one barren among them*; that is to ſay, thy Teeth are white, even, and well-ſet.

The Poetick Style very different from the Proſe.

As for the Poetick Style, it is ſo different from the Proſe, that it is in a manner quite another Language; ſo that a Man, who has *Hebrew* enough to read the Hiſtorical Parts of the Bible, when he has gone thro' *Geneſis*, and comes to *Jacob*'s Bleſſings, will find himſelf entirely ignorant of the Matter, neither will he underſtand but juſt the Beginning and End of the Book of *Job*.

The Reaſons of it.

This great Difference ariſes from the many Words and Phraſes that are not the ſame with thoſe in Proſe; from the Tropes and Figures, that are very frequent and bold; from the Conſtruction, which is very irregular, and ſuppoſes abundance of Words to be underſtood. On the other hand, this Style abounds with Repetitions, and the ſame Thoughts are expreſſed twice over in different Terms: *Have Mercy upon me, O God, after thy great Goodneſs; according to the Multitude of thy Mercies, do away mine Offences* (*a*). The ſame is obſervable almoſt throughout this whole Pſalm. They did this, either to afford the Mind a longer time to contemplate the ſame Thought, or becauſe theſe Songs or Hymns were ſung alternately by two different *Choirs*, or for ſome ſuch like Reaſon.

The Marks of the Poetick Style.

But however this be, theſe Repetitions are the moſt obvious and common Mark of the Poetick Style. Hence chiefly it is, that I take *Lamech*'s Diſcourſe to his two Wives, wherein he informs them of his having killed *Cain* (*b*), to be poetical; and if this Conjecture be true, it is the moſt antient Piece of Poetry now in the World. The Thoughts or Sentiments that are clothed with this eloquent and figurative Language, are not only true, ſolid, and uſeful, (as indeed who can doubt it, know-

(*a*) Pſalm li. 1.

(*b*) *Our Author ſeems here to have miſtaken the Senſe of* Lamech's *Words.*

ing

ing them to be the Inſpirations of the Spirit of God) but are likewiſe very often beautiful, ſhining, and ſublime.

Inſtances of this are the cxxxixth Pſalm, where the Knowledge of God, and the Impoſſibility of flying from his Preſence, are deſcribed in a wonderful elevated Manner. The xlivth, where we behold the righteous Man ſearching after even his moſt ſecret Sins, and thoſe of other Men wherein he partakes; and civth, where we have a beautiful and noble Deſcription of Nature, and of the Providence of God watching over it. To theſe might be added moſt of the others, too many to be enumerated. Neither are the Thoughts ſet down at random, but are ranged with a great deal of Art and Contrivance. Each Song and each Pſalm is a compleat Piece, whoſe Parts follow one another in their natural Order. Sometimes there is a Connection for ſeveral whole Pſalms together, as the ciiid, civth, cvth, cvith, cviith, which are all Hymns of Praiſe and Thankſgiving. The ciiid praiſes God for the Bleſſings of Grace; the civth for thoſe of Nature; the cvth for the Benefits he hath beſtowed upon his People; the cvith for his Goodneſs in pardoning their Offences; theſe two laſt make one continued Hiſtory; the cviith renders God Thanks, in behalf of all Mankind, for his Aid and Aſſiſtance in the four great Calamities of Life, Famine, Captivity, Sickneſs, and Shipwrock. Inſtances where the Deſign is particular, are Pſalms the xviiith, xixth, xxiid, lxxviiith, lxxxixth, xciſt, and the two Songs of *Moſes*; that in *Exodus*, after the Paſſage thro' the *Red-Sea*; and that in *Deuteronomy*, a little before his Death.

Acroſticks. Some Pieces, where the Order was entirely arbitrary, becauſe they conſiſt only of the Sentiments of the Paſſions, or Maxims of Morality, which have no neceſſary Connexion, are compoſed after the Acroſtick Manner, according to the Order of the Letters of the Alphabet; that they might, in all likelihood, be the leſs burdenſome to the Memory. Of this kind are the *Lamentations* of *Jeremiah*, ſeveral Pſalms, as the xxxivth and cxixth, and *Solomon*'s Deſcription of a virtuous Wife, with which he concludes his *Proverbs*.

Want of moving Sentiments in the moral Parts made up by beautiful Paintings, &c. It is obſervable of the Book of *Proverbs*, of great Part of *Job*, and of ſeveral of the Pſalms, as the iſt, xvth, xxxvii th, whoſe Subjects are purely Moral Matters, that the want of tender and moving Sentiments is amply compenſated by beautiful Paintings,

Paintings, fine Metaphors, and noble Compariſons, from whence is derived the Name of Parables, or *Proverbs*. The Obſcurity of the Style is no greater than what is neceſſary to exerciſe the Mind in an agreeable manner, whilſt the important Truths conveyed under ſuch natural and lively Images, make deep Impreſſions on the Heart; and therefore as *Moſes*'s Poetry is the more ſtrong and maſculine, that of *Solomon* ſeems to be the more refined and polite. Examine, among other things, how he repreſents, in ſeveral Paſſages of the Preface to his *Proverbs*, the Artifices of Women to enſnare young Men, and the fatal Conſequences of a criminal Paſſion. You'll find there the Flames and Chains of Love, the Darts that pierce the Heart, and the Wings wherewith the Lover flies like a Bird into the Snare that is laid for him, and all the other Thoughts, that appear ſo bright and gallant in profane Poetry, painted to the Life; but with this very material Difference, that *Solomon*'s Deſcriptions are intended only to raiſe our Horror and Averſion.

What we can know of the Hebrew Poetry.

All then we can know of the *Hebrew* Poetry, is the Deſign, the Thoughts, the Figures, and the Language. The Knowledge of this laſt is indeed confined to thoſe who are Maſters of the *Hebrew* Tongue; others muſt be content to behold its Beauties thro' the Veil of a Tranſlation, which deprives them of all their Luſtre, more eſpecially with regard to the Pſalms, where the Veil is double, for the *Vulgate* Verſion is taken from the Tranſlation of the *Seventy*. Let a Man thus tranſlate the moſt beautiful Paſſages of the *Latin* Poets, or rather to make the Caſe exactly parallel, let him render into *Engliſh* the *Latin* Verſions of the *Greek* Poets, and ſee whether they will not be intolerable. Hence therefore we may judge of the great Beauty of the *Hebrew* Poetry, ſince it ſhines ſo viſible even thro' a ſecond-hand Tranſlation.

Several Charms and Graces unknown to us.

But beſides theſe, there were many more conſiderable Charms and Graces that are entirely unknown to us, and even to thoſe *Jews* themſelves, that are beſt skilled in the *Hebrew* Language. For the antient Pronunciation of this as well as of all the other dead Tongues being entirely loſt, we can have no Notion of the Harmony of the Words and Quantity of the Syllables, wherein the whole Beauty of Verſes conſiſts. We have not ſo much as any Rules, as we have for the *Greek* and *Latin*, to find out the Quantity of the Syllables, the Names and Number of the Feet,

Feet, and the Conſtruction of the Verſes, and yet, doubtleſs, the *Hebrews* obſerved all theſe Things. We find, in their Poetical Works, Letters added or taken away at the end of the Words, which are plain Proofs of their being confined to a certain Number of Syllables, and the word *Selah* ſeems to be of no other uſe, but to fill up a void Space, and help out the Verſe. St. *Jerom* (*a*) ſpeaks of theſe Verſes as Things well-known to him, and compares thoſe of *Job* to Hexameters, and thoſe of the *Pſalms*, *Lamentations*, and the other Hymns or Songs, to the Verſes of *Horace*, *Pindar*, and the reſt of the *Lyrick* Poets: But ſince his time, the *Jews* have entirely loſt this antient Art of Verſification, and have ſubſtituted one in its room borrowed from the *Arabs*.

We are ignorant likewiſe of the Manner of the Singing and Dancing that accompanied theſe Divine Hymns. We are ſure indeed that they were ſung, and that they were compoſed for that purpoſe, from their being ſtiled *Sir* or Hymns, and *Mizmor* or Pſalm, and from ſeveral expreſs Declarations of Scripture, as at the Paſſage thro' the *Red Sea*, and from the Inſcriptions over the Pſalms, where frequent mention is made of the Maſters in Muſick. And we may in ſome meaſure judge of the Fineneſs of their Vocal Muſick, from the Beauty of the Words, and from all that Art and Contrivance juſt now taken notice of.

It is certain alſo, that their Singing was accompany'd with Dancing; for the *Choirs* (*b*) the Scriptures ſo often ſpeak of, are Companies of Dancing-Men and Dancing-Women. Mention is made of Dancings at the time of publick Rejoicings for Victories, and at the Celebration of ſome Religious Ceremonies, as at the Proceſſion made by *David*, when he brought back the Ark of the Covenant to *Sion*, and at the Dedication of the Walls of *Jeruſalem*, in the time of *Nehemiah*, where the two *Choirs*, who had begun ſinging on the Walls, came and made an end together in the Temple. Our Notions then of theſe Sacred Songs muſt needs be very imperfect, ſeeing we have nothing left us but the naked Letter ſtript of all its external Ornaments. They were doubtleſs other-gueſs Things in the mouth of the Muſician, ſet off with all the Splendor and Magnificence

(*a*) *Præf. in* Job. *See this Matter ſet in a clear Light in the following Diſſertation.*

(*b*) מחלת *which we tranſlate* Dances, *is rendred in the Vulgate by* Chorus, Exod. xv. 20, &c.

of

of the Feſtivals they were deſigned for ; and therefore to form a tolerable Idea of their Beauty, we muſt imagine ourſelves placed in the Temple of *Solomon*, amidſt innumerable Multitudes, crowding the Courts and Galleries, and beholding there the Altar loaded with Victims, and ſurrounded with the Prieſts, all cloathed in white Garments, and the *Levites*, at a diſtance, diſpoſed into Companies, ſome playing on Inſtruments, others ſinging and dancing in a grave and ſolemn manner..

Hebrews had no Dramatick or Heroick Poems.

The *Hebrews* never had, as we know of, any Comedies, Tragedies, Epic Poems, or any of that kind of Poetry *Plato* calls *Poetry of Imitation*, or that imitates the Manners of Men. The *Song of Solomon* is ſo far a Dramatick Poem, as that different *Perſons* are introduced ſpeaking. The ſame may be obſerved in the Pſalms, and all the other Poetical Works in Scripture, there being no Poetry without it; but as *Solomon*'s *Song* conſiſts only of Sentiments, it wants what ſeems abſolutely neceſſary to Dramatic and Heroic Poems, a continued Scene of Action. We have only in Scripture, Hymns, Pſalms, Odes, or, as we call them, Songs ; that is to ſay, that kind of Poetry which *Plato* affirms to be alone the moſt antient ; and indeed it does not appear that the *Greeks* copied from others their Dramatick Poetry ; all their Poets of this kind are of a later Date than the *Babyloniſh* Captivity.

The more we conſider the Pſalms, the more we find in them.

The Pſalter is a Collection of 150 Pſalms, compoſed upon different Subjects, and by different Hands. When one reads them at firſt in a curſory manner, they ſeem to be nothing elſe but Repetitions of the ſame thing over and over; but the more one conſiders them, the more full one finds them of different Thoughts, and of always new and ſurprizing Figures. This pleaſing Variety is to be met with in all the celebrated Pieces of Antiquity, but is rarely to be found in our modern Compoſitions ; and for that Reaſon they are for the moſt part extremely dull and tireſome. Theſe Figures are bold, but natural: Interrogations, Apoſtrophes, and Exclamations.

In thoſe Pſalms, where Deſign is required, we find it very cloſely followed and perfectly well executed. For example, the xviiith Pſalm is a Thankſgiving of *David*, after God had delivered him out of the hands of his Enemies. He immediately propoſes his Deſign: (1.) He repreſents his deplorable State. (2.) His Prayer. (3.) How God hearken'd unto it. (4.) How

he reſolved to ſend him Help. Here he paints out, in a Poetical Manner, the Power of God, that makes all Nature tremble. (5.) How God diſcomfited all his Enemies. (6.) How he delivered *David*. (7.) Why he did ſo? becauſe of the righteous Dealing of *David*. (8.) The happy Condition wherein he was placed. (9.) His Advantage over his Adverſaries, their Miſery and Fall. (10.) The Favours and Bleſſings he ſtill hopes for. (11.) He concludes with praiſing God as he begun (*a*). This Pſalm contains all theſe Particulars exactly in the manner I have ſet them down, and this Order of Things appears to me very beautiful; he was in Affliction; he prayed for Aſſiſtance; God ſent him Help; his Enemies are confounded; he was not only delivered, but exalted above them; and, in his turn, caſt down under his Feet all his Perſecutors.

The Narration of the Hiſtorical Pſalms different from that of a mere Hiſtory.

It is to be obſerved, that the narrative Style, in the Hiſtorical Pſalms, is very different from that of a mere Hiſtory. None but the principal and moſt remarkable Events are taken notice of, and if any Circumſtance indulges the Prophet in his Poetick Flight, he never fails of raiſing it to the Sublime. See the Hiſtory of *Joſeph* in the cvth Pſalm; God *called for a Dearth upon the Land, and deſtroy'd all the Proviſion of Bread: But he had ſent a Man before them* (before the Children of *Iſrael*, of whom he was ſpeaking) *even* Joſeph, *who was ſold to be a Bond-Servant*. Obſerve the Sublimity of the Narration, how it ſoars immediately as high as the Purpoſes and Decrees of God! Obſerve likewiſe how beautiful the Figure! God calls for the Dearth, juſt as if he was laying his Commands on ſome rational and intelligent Creature. There are no words in our Language that can properly expreſs what follows in the Original. The Scriptures in this, and ſome other Places, compare Bread, that is, the Neceſſaries of Life, to a Staff, on which a feeble Perſon leans as he walks; ſo that to take away Bread from Men, is the ſame thing as to take away from an old infirm Perſon the Staff that ſupports him. But inſtead of all theſe Circumlocutions, the Scriptures, in ſtrong and bold Metaphors, peculiar to the *Hebrew* Tongue, expreſs it thus, *The Famine breaks the Staff of our Bread*. After this, the Pſalmiſt repreſents *Joſeph* in Irons, to denote, in a word, his Impriſonment, and immediately returns to God, who delivers him by his Word and by his Wiſdom with which he inſpires him; and

(*a*) *See* xvii Vulgate.

accordingly

accordingly *the King ſent and delivered him*; *the Prince of the People let him go free. He made him Lord alſo of his Houſe, and Ruler of all his Subſtance, that he might inform his Princes after his Will, and teach his Senator's Wiſdom.* We have here, in this narrow Compaſs, the whole Hiſtory of *Joſeph*, his Captivity, his Deliverance, his Advancement to Power, and all by the Direction and Appointment of God. There is ſomething of this kind of Narration to be ſeen in *Virgil*, where he repreſents, upon the Shield of *Eneas*, the moſt ſhining Paſſages of the *Roman* Hiſtory.

The cxxxixth Pſalm is an Inſtance of ſublime and elevated, as well as of exquiſitely fine and delicate Sentiments; *O Lord! thou haſt ſearched me out, and known me*; *thou knoweſt my Down-ſitting, and mine Up-riſing*: Thou knoweſt all my outward Actions, and what is more, *Thou underſtandeſt my Thoughts long before*; *thou art about my Path, and about my Bed, and ſpieſt out all my Ways. For, lo! there is not a Word in my Tongue, but thou, O Lord! knoweſt it altogether.* And no wonder, for *Thou haſt faſhioned me behind and before, and laid thy Hand upon me*, to preſerve and guide me; *ſuch Knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me, I cannot attain unto it.* Then varying the Figure, he breaks out on a ſudden into this Exclamation, *Whither ſhall I go from thy Spirit, or whither ſhall I fly from thy Preſence?* He takes in the whole Extent of the Univerſe, conſidered in all its Dimenſions; *If I climb up into Heaven, thou art there*; *if I go down to Hell, thou art there alſo.* And again, in a more noble Figure, *If I take the Wings of the Morning, and remain in the uttermoſt Parts of the Sea.* To this he does not coldly ſay, It would be all in vain, or even, as he ſaid in the foregoing Verſe, *Thou art there*; but makes uſe of a much more fine and elaborate Thought, as of a Man that accuſed himſelf of extreme Folly, in endeavouring to conceal himſelf from God: So far ſhall I be from flying from thy Preſence, that *even there alſo ſhall thy Hand lead me, and thy right Hand ſhall hold me.* What chimerical Notions ſoever I may frame to myſelf, I can never think of ſubſiſting one moment without thee: Tho' I could fly, as I ſaid, on the Wings of the Morning, it would be thy Hand that would guide me, and thy right Hand that would ſupport me. Here he ſeems to have quite exhauſted his Imagi-

nation; but behold a new and more ſtudied means of hiding himſelf from the All-ſeeing Eye of God: *If I ſay, peradventure the Darkneſs ſhall cover me, then ſhall my Night be turned into Day.* Still this is all mere Folly and Extravagance; *The Darkneſs is no Darkneſs with thee, but the Night is as clear as the Day; the Darkneſs and Light to thee are both alike.* Let our modern Wits, after this, look upon the honeſt Shepherds of *Paleſtine* as a Company of rude and unpoliſhed Clowns; let them, if they can, produce, from profane Authors, Thoughts that are more ſublime, more delicate, or better turn'd; not to mention the profound Divinity and ſolid Piety couch'd under theſe Expreſſions. The reſt of the Pſalm contains admirable Reflections on the Formation of Man in his Mother's Womb, and concerning Predeſtination; whence the Prophet takes occaſion to expreſs his Love and Eſteem for the Righteous, and his Hatred and Contempt for the Wicked.

Variety of Tropes and Figures in all the Pſalms.

Variety of beautiful Tropes and Figures every where ſhine throughout the whole Book of Pſalms, tho' the Number is not ſo great in the hiſtorical Pſalms, as in thoſe that conſiſt of Prayers and Exhortations. In the xciſt Pſalm, one of thoſe that are the moſt familiar to us, the Poet himſelf begins with laying down his Deſign, namely, to declare the Protection of God towards Men; and this he does in two Expreſſions, the words whereof exactly correſpond with one another. In the two next Verſes the Perſon protected is introduced ſpeaking; but makes uſe of two different Figures. In the ſecond Verſe he addreſſes himſelf immediately to God. In the third, he ſpeaks of him in the third Perſon. In the fifth Verſe, the Poet again ſpeaks, addreſſing himſelf to the protected Perſon, and enumerates, in great Variety of Compariſons and Metaphors, the ſeveral Methods and Ways of Protection. At the ninth Verſe, the juſt Man interrupts him, with ſaying, *For thou, O Lord, art my Hope*, to denote the Reaſon of what had been ſaid; then the Poet immediately anſwers, *Thou haſt ſet thine Houſe of Defence very high, there ſhall no Evil happen unto thee*, &c. and goes on in the four following Verſes (addreſſing himſelf all along to the protected Perſon) to declare other and greater Effects of the Divine Protection. Among the reſt, the continual Aſſiſtance of good Angels, and their Power over the Demons, repreſented in Scripture under the Character of venomous Creatures.

Creatures. In the three laſt Verſes, God himſelf is introduced ſpeaking, to confirm and authorize all that had been ſaid before, who likewiſe declares ſome farther Effects of his Protection, concluding with a Promiſe of long Life, and a Sight of his Salvation. They who are never ſo little verſed in the Poets, are not at all ſurprized at this ſudden ſhifting of the Perſons, without any notice to prepare them for it. Nothing is more common in *Horace*, not only in his Odes, but in his Satires and Epiſtles; and I ſee no Reaſon why the xciſt Pſalm ſhould be looked upon as Dramatick upon this Account, unleſs the greateſt Part of the others be reckoned ſo too.

And in all the Poetical Works of Scripture

By the Light of theſe few Examples, we may diſcover an infinite Number of the like Beauties; for the Pſalms every where abound with them, and not only the Pſalms, but *Job*, where the Poetry is generally more bold and ſublime, and all the other Poetical Works of Scripture. Read, for Inſtance, the Song of *Moſes* at the end of *Deuteronomy*, and the Song of *Barak* and *Deborah*.

Our Knowledge of the Hebrew Poetry very imperfect.

But after all, to ſay nothing of the Difference between our Cuſtoms and Manners, how very imperfect is our Knowledge of the Beauties of theſe Works? It is certain, as hath been obſerved, that all we know of the *Hebrew* Poetry is confined to the Deſign, the Thoughts, and the Figures. As for the Language, none but thoſe that are ſkilled in the *Hebrew*, can judge of it; and where is the Man that can boaſt he is a perfect Maſter of that Tongue? But for the other Beauties, I mean the Harmony of the Words, the Meaſure of the Verſes, and the Airs or Tunes of the Hymns and Songs, I will be bold to ſay not a Man upon Earth knows any thing of the Matter. Now there is no one but knows how eſſential all theſe Graces and Ornaments are to Poetry.

We are entirely ignorant of the Pronunciation of the *Hebrew*, as well as of the *Greek* and *Latin*, and other dead Tongues. And as is evident, from the different ways in the Septuagint, St. *Jerom*, and other antient Authors, of writing the ſame *Hebrew* Word in *Greek* or *Latin* Letters, the Pronunciation has for many Ages been loſt. We have not even the Privilege of knowing, as we do in the *Greek* and *Latin* Poetry, the Meaſure of the Verſes, and Quantity of the Syllables. In fine, we know no more of the Nature of the Airs, or Tunes of the

Pſalms

Pſalms and Songs, than we do of thoſe of the *Greek* and *Latin* Odes; and yet they were compoſed on purpoſe to be ſung, as is plain from the Sacred Hiſtory, and the Inſcriptions over the Pſalms.

Plato, according to the Notions of the wiſeſt of the Antients, is of Opinion, that Airs and Words ought to be inſeparable, and that to compoſe Verſes without a Tune, or Tunes without Words, as thoſe play'd on Muſical Inſtruments, are great Abuſes of theſe Things. That the Airs or Tunes of the Songs or Hymns were extremely fine, we have ſeveral good Proofs: (1.) The Beauty of the Words, and the artful Manner of their Poetry, which make it probable that every thing elſe was anſwerable to them. (2.) The Variety of muſical Inſtruments, whoſe Names are mentioned in the Holy Scriptures. (3.) The great Number of Muſicians, who, being inſtructed in their Art by their Predeceſſors, and making Muſick the chief Buſineſs of their Lives, render'd themſelves Maſters of it; among whom, doubtleſs, there were ſome at leaſt that were extraordinary in their way.

The Muſick of the Antients.

If I may be allowed to give my Opinion of what we have no diſtinct Knowledge of, I imagine that their Muſick was compoſed with great Simplicity, and that the Beauty and Excellency of it lay in aptly expreſſing and humouring the Senſe of the Words, in moving and affecting the Heart in an agreeable and tender manner, and in exciting thoſe Paſſions and Sentiments the Poet intended to inſpire; but that it had not that Mixture and Variety of different Parts, and thoſe Sweetneſſes of our modern Muſick: I ground theſe Conjectures upon the Air and Manner in general of the Writings of thoſe early Ages.

Literal Tranſlations loſe all the Beauties of the Original.

We are likewiſe, as has been hinted, at a great loſs how to judge of the Beauty of the Words, becauſe our Tranſlations are too ſervile and too literal. Were a Man to render the Odes of *Horace* into our Language word for word, they would loſe all their Life and Spirit: *Silver hath no Colour*, *O* Criſpus Saluſtius! *thou Enemy to thin Plates of Metal concealed in the avaritious Earth, unleſs it ſhines in a temperate Uſe.* I took theſe Verſes juſt as they lay before me. Let us try the very firſt of all his Works: *O* Mecenas! *ſprung from Forefathers Kings*; *O my Support and ſweet Ornament! There are ſome whom it delights to have gathered together in the Courſe*

the

the Olympick *Duſt, and whom the Boundary, avoided by the fervid Wheels, and the illuſtrious Palm-Tree lifts up to the Gods Lords of the Earths.* As theſe Paſſages were not culled out on purpoſe, I ſuppoſe the Caſe would be the ſame with almoſt any other. I have not imitated the Tranſpoſition of the words as they are in the *Latin*, becauſe our Language will not admit of it, and there are ſome of the Words which may be rendered ſtill more literally, *There is no Colour to Silver*, for *Silver hath no Colour*; and in the other Inſtance, *my Bulwark*, inſtead of *my Support*. And after all, there ought to be a greater Affinity between our Language and the *Latin*, from whence it is derived, than between the *Greek*, or *Latin*, and the *Hebrew*, with which they have not, as we know of, any manner of Relation. Beſides, theſe Tranſlations are made immediately from the Original, and therefore to give an Inſtance of a Tranſlation, like that of the Pſalms, we muſt render into our Language a Stanza of *Pindar* from the *Latin* Verſion; one of the eaſieſt is as follows.

O Hymns ruling over the Lute! what God? what Hero? what Man ſhall we praiſe? Certainly Piſa *is* Jupiter's, *and* Hercules *inſtituted the* Olympick *Combat, the firſt Fruits of the Spoils of War; but it is* Theron *that muſt be ſung with the Voice, becauſe of his Race in a Chariot with four Horſes Conqueror, the Juſt, the Hoſpitable, the Support of* Agrigentum, *Flower of noble Anceſtors, Governor of Cities.* There are many Places in *Pindar*, which tranſlated thus word for word, would appear downright Nonſenſe.

The Neceſſity of it.

What has been ſaid concerning the Beauty of the Pſalms in the Original, ought not in the leaſt to leſſen our Eſteem for the *Vulgate* Verſion. All Poetry, as is plain from the Inſtances above, muſt of neceſſity loſe the greateſt part of its Graces and Beauties in verbal Tranſlations. This is an unavoidable Misfortune, and conſequently the Tranſlation is by no means to be found fault with upon that Account.

The Septuagint Verſion of the Pſalms why retained in the Romiſh Church.

The *Seventy*, in rendering the Old Teſtament into *Greek*, have kept as cloſe to the Letter as poſſible, fearing that the leaſt Paraphraſe might alter the Senſe. Had they not taken this Method with relation to the Pſalms, all the noble Figures and beautiful Expreſſions of the Original had vaniſhed, and inſtead of the Thoughts and Sentiments of the Prophet, we ſhould have

have had, it is to be feared, thoſe of the Tranſlators. The Primitive Chriſtians at *Rome*, and in other Places where *Latin* was the vulgar Tongue, underſtood nothing of *Hebrew*, and therefore were obliged to tranſlate the Scriptures from the *Greek* Septuagint; and it is well known, that the Church made uſe of this Verſion till that of St. *Jerom* came to be received, that is to ſay, for more than ſix hundred Years: ſo that all Chriſtians, for ſo many Ages together, being uſed to ſing the Pſalms according to this antient Verſion, the Catholick Church, cautious of making the leaſt Alterations even in Externals, hath thought fit to retain this Verſion from the *Greek*. It is true indeed, that it differs in many Places from the *Hebrew* Text, as it is now, and as it was in St. *Jerom*'s Time, and that there are ſome Paſſages, according to our Verſion, more obſcure and difficult; but then there are others where we find that the *Seventy* followed a more correct Copy, or a better *Reading*. And in what Place ſoever our Verſion is different from the *Hebrew*, the Senſe is always Sound and Catholick; and that is ſufficient. We ought not to be more nice and ſcrupulous than all thoſe pious and holy Men, who, from the very Beginning of Chriſtianity, have taken from this Verſion, as it is at preſent, the Subject-Matter of their Prayers and Praiſes, and of their Exhortations and Inſtructions to the People.

Private Perſons, however, have the Church's Leave and Approbation to conſult the various *Readings*, in order to find out the beſt Senſes, and diſplay all the Beauties of the Pſalms; as Cardinal *Bellarmine*, among others, has done with very good Succeſs. As for the reſt of the Poetical Works of Scripture, we have them all tranſlated immediately from the *Hebrew* by St. *Jerom*.

The Concluſion, ſhowing the true Uſe of Poetry.

To conclude; we muſt not wonder that our Taſte of Poetry is ſo very different from that of the Antients. The Reaſon is, to ſpeak the plain Truth, becauſe our modern Compoſitions are ſuch miſerable Stuff in compariſon of theirs. We write indeed at preſent in a more correct and polite manner than our Poets of old did, or even than thoſe of the laſt Century; nevertheleſs we are not in the main one whit altered for the better. Love-Songs and Drunken-Catches are ſtill the Productions of our Top-Wits; theſe are the noble Subjects that employ their Pens; and we have found the means, in defiance of all Antiquity, whom

yet

yet we pretend to imitate, to ſtuff our Tragedies and Heroic Poems with little mean amorous Intrigues and Follies, without any manner of regard to the Gravity of thoſe Works that are ſaid to be ſo ſolemn and ſerious; and without the leaſt Apprehenſion of confounding the Diſtinction and Characters of Poems, which were ſo religiouſly obſerved and kept up by the Antients.

For my part, I can never perſuade myſelf that this is the true Uſe of a Poetical Genius. No, I can never believe that God endows a Man with a fine and lively Imagination, with beautiful and ſublime Sentiments, with an eaſy and natural Expreſſion, and the other Qualifications of a Poet, to no other end but that he ſhould employ them upon trifling and wanton Subjects, in ſoothing his own criminal Paſſions, or in exciting laſcivious Thoughts in others. I much rather think that theſe Divine Accompliſhments were intended for quite different Purpoſes, to give us a Reliſh of ſolid Truths, to render Virtue and Goodneſs more amiable, and inflame us with the Love of all that may feed and improve our Souls, as the agreeable Taſtes and pleaſant Flavours of our Meats and Drinks were deſigned as Incentives to thoſe Things that nouriſh and preſerve our Bodies.

For after all, why are Profit and Pleaſure, Inſtruction and Delight ſeparated? Why are the Precepts of Religion and Diſcourſes of Morality rendered like bitter Potions by a harſh and dry Style? or like inſipid Diſhes by their dull and tedious Lengths? So that to get them down we muſt fortify ourſelves beforehand with many ſerious Reflections, and call in our beſt Reaſon to our Aſſiſtance. On the contrary, why are all our Talents, Study, and Arts of Eloquence employed in dreſſing up, for young and tender Minds, *Ragoos* and *Dainties* to corrupt and poiſon their Morals, under a Pretence of pleaſing their Palates? Either therefore Poetry in general muſt be condemned (which the Learned and Equitable will never agree to) or its Courſe muſt be diverted to a nobler Channel, turned to Subjects worthy of its Divine Original, and made to go hand in hand with true Philoſophy, that is, with ſound Morality and ſolid Piety. I am ſenſible an Undertaking of this kind would be entirely new in our Language, and that hitherto we have had no Inſtances of Sacred Poetry that has had any tolerable

Succeſs; and doubtleſs one great Reaſon of it, is the Corruption of the Age, and the Spirit of Libertiniſm that every where prevails: but may it not likewiſe, in ſome meaſure, be owing to the Fault of our Writers? I can meet with no Hymns that come up to the Character of thoſe in Scripture, and in the Tranſlations that have been made of the Pſalms themſelves, too little Care has been taken to keep up the Spirit and Force of the Expreſſions, or to preſerve the beautiful Tropes and Figures that give a Luſtre to the whole; and what we call Paraphraſes, are Things ſpun out to ſuch immoderate Lengths, that the Thoughts and Sentiments of the Prophet lie buried among a huge Heap of Rubbiſh. Perhaps it would be better to imitate than tranſlate them, and as theſe Divine Poems contain a great many Things that don't at all ſquare with our Cuſtoms and Manners, the beſt way would be to attempt ſomething of the like nature, upon Subjects that are more known and familiar to us; upon the Myſteries of our Holy Religion; upon the ſudden and wonderful Progreſs of the Goſpel; upon the Virtues of the Saints and Martyrs; upon the Benefits and Mercies that our Nation, our Country, and our City have received at the hands of God; and upon all the general Heads of Morality, as the Happineſs of good Men, the Contempt of the Things of this World, *&c.* with an Eye always to our own Uſages, Cuſtoms, and Notions of Things.

I don't know whether an Attempt of this nature would not have many Difficulties to encounter in the execution; however, it muſt be owned, that the Deſign at leaſt is noble; and if we deſpair of ever being able to accompliſh it, we muſt not look with an Eye of Envy upon thoſe who have ſucceeded in it. We muſt therefore give the *Hebrew* Poetry its juſt Praiſe and Commendation, tho' at the ſame time we ſhould find it to be inimitable.

A

DISSERTATION

Concerning the

POETRY

OF THE

ANTIENT *HEBREWS.*

THE many different Opinions concerning the Nature of the *Hebrew* Poetry, and the Errors and Miſtakes of thoſe who have undertaken to clear up this Point, are evident Proofs of our Ignorance in this Matter. The moſt antient and learned Authors upon this Head are *Joſephus*, *Origen*, *Euſebius*, and St. *Jerom*, whoſe great Name and Reputation have drawn in for the moſt Part thoſe, who have ſince writ upon this Subject, to embrace their Sentiments. They had been informed that the Songs of *Moſes* were writ in Verſe; and *Joſephus* does not ſcruple to aſſure us in ſeveral Places (*a*), that they were writ in Heroick Verſe. *Origen* and *Euſebius* (*b*) are

Different Opinions about the Nature of the Hebrew *Poetry.*

(*a*) Antiq. l. 2. c. ult. lib. 4. c. ult. lib. 7. c. 12.
(*b*) Euſ. Præp. l. 11. c. 3.

St. Jerom's *Opinion.*

of the ſame Opinion; and St. *Jerom* very much improves the Notion, and tells us (*a*), *That the Pſalter was compoſed of Iambic, Alcäic, and Saphic Verſes, like* Pindar *and* Horace, *and that the Songs in* Deuteronomy (*b*) *and* Iſaiah, *the Books of* Job *and* Solomon, *are written in Hexameters and Pentameters.* He ſays elſewhere (*c*), that the Song in *Deuteronomy* conſiſts of Iambic Verſes of four Feet, juſt as the cxixth and clxvth Pſalms, whereas the cxith and cxiith Pſalms conſiſt likewiſe of Iambic Verſes but of three Feet only. He obſerves in the *Lamentations* of *Jeremiah* a ſort of Saphic Verſes, and others of three Meaſures: In fine, he repeats what he had ſaid concerning the Book of *Job* in his Preface to that Book, affirming, that *from theſe Words,* Let the Day periſh wherein I was born, *the Verſes are Hexameters, compoſed of Dactyls and Spondees, intermixed here and there with other Feet of the ſame Meaſure, tho' not of the ſame Number of Syllables, becauſe of the great Variety of that Language. Sometimes there is no regard to the Quantity of the Syllables, and we find only a bare Ryme, or an agreeable Cadence, which is diſcernible by thoſe only who are inſtructed in the Rules of Poetry.* In a word, he ſpeaks of the Book of Pſalms, in ſeveral Places (*d*), as of a Work conſiſting of Lyric Verſes, like thoſe of *Pindar*, *Alcæus*, *Horace*, *Catullus*, and *Serenus*.

We very juſtly admire the profound Capacity of St. *Jerom*, and pay a great Deference to the Opinions of ſo eminent a Father of the Church; but, however, it muſt be owned, that a great many of our learned Criticks in the *Hebrew* Tongue don't obſerve now in the Pſalms, and the other Poetical Works of Scripture, the ſame Feet and Meaſures St. *Jerom* ſaw there; and even the moſt zealous Advocates of this holy Father ſay no more, than that we are not to underſtand him as if he meant we were to find in the Pſalter and Book of *Job* perfect *Hexameters* and *Pentameters*, or Lyric Verſes, exactly of the ſame Feet and Meaſures with thoſe of *Horace*, *Pindar*, and *Sapho*, but only ſomething near a-kin to them, ſome Cadences that have a Similitude or Reſemblance of theſe Meaſures; *Simili-*

(*a*) Præf. in Chronic. Euſeb.
(*b*) Deut. xxxii.
(*c*) Epiſt. 155. ad Paulam Urbicam.
(*d*) Epiſt. ad Paulin. & lib. 9. Comment. in Ezek. xxx.

tudinem

tudinem (*a*) *quandam Heroicorum Verſuum intelligere debes, & ſic de cæteris Metrorum Generibus.*

Philo, ſpeaking of the *Eſſenes*, aſſures us, they had antient Poems delivered down to them by their Poets of old (*b*); he means the Sacred Authors of the Scripture-Poetry. The Verſes (ſays he) are of ſeveral Forms and Meaſures; ſome conſiſt of three Members, and are to be ſung at the time of going to the Temple to worſhip; others are Hymns to be recited at the Altar, whilſt the Sacrifices are offering, and the Libations pouring out before the Lord; ſome again are to be ſung ſtanding, without any Motion; and others are deſigned for *Choirs* and for Dances. Philo's *Notion.*

But *Scaliger* (*c*) can ſee nothing of all this, he can't perceive the leaſt Signs of any Feet in the Verſes of the antient *Hebrews*; on the contrary he aſſerts, that their Language, as well as that of the *Syrians*, *Arabians*, and *Abyſſines*, is incapable of being confined to Feet and Meaſures. *Nam ut in Hebraïco, Syriaco, Arabico, & Abyſſino idiomate ulla metri Species concipi poſſit, nemo efficere poſſit; quia id Natura Sermonis non patitur.* He adds, that there are no *Hexameters* in *Job*, nor Iambic or Alcaïc Verſes in the Pſalms: *De Pſalterio magis miror, cum neque in eo, neque in Threnis ullum Canticum ſit metricis Legibus aſtrictum, ſed mere ſoluta Oratio, Caractere Poëtico animata.* Scaliger's *Sentiments contrary to St.* Jerom's.

Auguſtinus d'Eugubio is no leſs warm for this Opinion; he ſays, that the *Hebrews* have neither Heroic nor Iambic Verſes, nor any Meaſures like thoſe of the *Greeks* and *Latins*, but only ſome faint Reſemblances of them, ſuch as are to be met with in the Songs of the Barbarians. One finds in their Poetry certain Cadences, which give the Style a different Turn from Proſe; one obſerves a Manner of Expreſſion and certain Figures, which make the Language deviate from the common Forms of Speech. *Carmen Hebraicum non idem eſt atque Græcorum & Latinorum; Hebraicum nulla Tempora, ſed Numerum duntaxat obſervat. Itaque neque Heroicum Carmen apud Hebræos extat, neque Iambicum, alia Genera; ſed ſimile quiddam, & quale Barbari diverſis Ritibus canunt.* This kind of Poetry D'Eugubio *of the ſame Opinion with* Scaliger.

(*a*) Vide Proleg. in Div. Biblioth. S. Hieron. nov. Edit. Art. 5.
(*b*) Ἱκέται, &c. Philo de Vita Contemplativa ad finem.
(*c*) Scaliger in Chronic. Euſeb.

is,

is more ſimple, more natural, more majeſtick, and more becoming the Greatneſs of God, than a Poetry ty'd down to Method and Rules; in which it is extremely difficult to expreſs, in a natural manner, the Sentiments of the Spirit of God, without injuring, at the ſame time, the Sublimity of the Senſe, and the Loftineſs of the Thoughts.

As are ſeveral other learned Criticks.

Scaliger's Opinion has been eſpouſed by ſeveral learned Criticks beſides *Auguſtinus d'Eugubio*, as *Lewis Cappel*, *Martinus*, *Samuel Bohlius*, *Vaſmuth*, *Pfeiffer*, &c. *Grotius* (*a*) may alſo be reckoned among thoſe Writers, who hold, that the Poetry of the antient *Hebrews* had neither Ryme nor Meaſure. And for my part I ſhall make no difficulty of liſting myſelf in their Number, and ſhall endeavour to defend their Opinion, after I have firſt laid down and confuted the Notions of thoſe who have undertaken to aſcertain the Manner of the *Hebrew* Poetry, by comparing it with that of the *Greeks* or *Latins*, or with that of the living Languages. I ſhall give myſelf no Trouble about thoſe Authors, who have advanced nothing but what they have from others, or thoſe who profeſs they underſtand nothing of the Matter, or believe it is impoſſible to be cleared up: I ſhall conſider thoſe Writers only, who have propoſed ſome new Scheme or Hypotheſis upon this Head.

The Schemes of ſome Moderns examined and confuted.

Mercerus. *Mercerus*, upon the third Chapter of *Job*, ſays, he had been informed that *Franciſcus Vatablus* had diſcovered the true Nature of the Verſes in *Job* and the Book of *Pſalms*, and that he had actually drawn up the Rules and Principles of them, in order to let the World into this great Secret. Every one allows the profound Capacity of *Vatablus* in Matters of this nature. *Mercerus* pleaſed himſelf with the Thoughts, that the Diſcoveries of this Great Man would one day be made publick, but there are no hopes at preſent of their ever ſeeing the Light; nay, it is even doubted whether *Vatablus* did ever write at all, or at leaſt whether he has left any thing finiſhed, upon this Subject.

Theodorus Herbert. *Theodorus Herbert* imagined he found in the Bible Verſes like thoſe of our Times, that is, with Rymes, according to certain Rules he preſcribes. He obſerved (as he ſays himſelf) ſome of theſe Verſes in *Pſal.* vi. 2. viii. 5. cv. 20. cvi. 5. cxvi. 7. cxviii. 25. cxix. 30. cxlvi. 7. *Job* xxi. 4. *Prov.* xxv. 19. But

(*a*) Grot. in Luc. I. 46.

what

what can be inferred from hence? Does it follow therefore that this artificial sort of Poetry was common among the *Jews* from the Time of *Moses*, *Job*, or *David*? Do a few Verses found in a Prose-Book prove the whole to be writ in Verse?

Some *Hebrew* Rabbins maintain, that their Poetry in Ryme is of a very long standing, and was in use at the time that their Forefathers sojourned in *Palestine*. They ground this Assertion of theirs upon certain *Hebrew* Verses in Ryme, found in the Kingdom of *Valencia*, upon the Tomb of one of the Officers of *Amasias* King of *Juda* (*a*): But this hath too much the Air of a Fable, to gain any Credit with those who are concerned only for the Truth. *Some* Hebrew *Rabbins.*

A modern Author, one *Meibomius* (*b*), pretends, that for these two thousand Years last past all the World have lived in ignorance of the Nature of the *Hebrew* Poetry but himself; and it is solely upon this extraordinary Knowledge of his, that he grounds all those Corrections and Amendments he has made in the Original Text of Scripture. *My Design* (says he, in his Epistle directed to all the Christian Kings and Princes in *Europe*) *is to publish a new Translation of the Holy Bible, with an Explanation of the most difficult Places, a Specimen whereof I here present you with; if you give it the Reception it deserves, I pass my Word to favour the Publick with the rest of the Old Testament, and make known the Measure of the Verses wherein it is written.* Meibomius.

In his Preface, he makes his Boast of having corrected, in the Sacred Text, above three thousand Faults, which made so many Alterations in the Sense of it, and all by the means of a Light darted into his Soul from above, and the help of the Rules of the *Hebrew* Poetry, which have lain concealed ever since the Days of *Jeremiah* and *Daniel*, and were unknown to *Haggai* and *Ezra*.

He adds, that if the antient Sages of *Judea* were to take a Trip into the World again, they would admire in him this inestimable Gift of Heaven; that the *Seventy* would readily acknowledge the Usefulness of their Labours; that *Origen* would throw away his *Hexapla*; that St. *Jerom* would compliment him upon having carried the Day from all the *Latin* Transla-

(*a*) Rab. Moses Ben Charif. Darkenoam.
(*b*) Journal des Savans, 1699.

tors,

tors, and congratulate him upon his Diſcovery of the *Hebrew* Poetry, and profound Knowledge in the Sacred Tongue.

This Author, with his Poetry, turns the whole Bible upſide down, and as yet affords us but a very ſmall Sketch of his Art, jealous of letting us into the Secret of ſo noble an Invention, he keeps the Key cloſe to himſelf. The Publick, in all appearance, have ſet light by his Eſſay, and don't ſeem at all deſirous of his Performances, ſince *Meibomius* has not hitherto made good any thing of what he ſo largely promiſed.

Gomarus. *Franciſcus Gomarus*, in his Book, intitled *Davidis Lyra*, takes upon him to prove, that the Verſes in Scripture are like thoſe of the *Greeks* and *Latins*. In order to this, he applies himſelf to lay down the Rules and Principles of the *Hebrew* Poetry, to aſcertain the Number of the Feet, and diſtinguiſh the ſeveral ſorts of the Verſes. His Book is divided into two Parts: In the firſt, he eſtabliſhes Rules for finding out the Quantity of the *Hebrew* Syllables; he mentions the ſeveral ſorts of Feet in the *Hebrew* Verſes, and compares them with thoſe of the *Greeks* and *Latins*. In the ſecond Part, he proceeds to the Application of his Rules to the Verſes in Scripture; he takes them to pieces, ſhews the Nature of their Compoſition, and produces Examples to confirm all he lays down. This Work of *Gomarus* gained him immediately the Applauſes of ſeveral learned Criticks, as *Buxtorf*, *Lewis de Dieu*, *Conſtantine l'Empereur*, *Heinſius*, and *Hottinger*: But *Lewis Cappel* ſtrenuouſly attacked him, and anſwered all his Arguments. He ſays, that *Gomarus*, in his Book, takes two Principles for granted, which he would find a very difficult matter to prove effectually: The firſt is, that the Vowel-Points, as they are now read in the *Hebrew* Bible, were not the Invention of After-Ages, but came immediately from the inſpired Penmen themſelves. The ſecond is, that no Alterations have happened to the Holy Scriptures, either thro' the Careleſſneſs of Tranſcribers, or by the Length of Time.

One of *Gomarus*'s Rules is this, *Scheva non vocalis eſt, ſed illius ſub Conſonante mobili Abſentiæ Nota*; *Scheva* is no Vowel, but denotes only the Abſence of a Vowel under a Conſonant that is pronounced. *Cappel* overthrows this Principle,

(1.) By the Authority of ſeveral Grammarians, who all teach, that *Scheva* hath the true Nature of a ſhort Vowel.

(2.) Be-

(2.) Becauſe by this Rule Multitudes of *Hebrew* Words are rendered incapable of being pronounced, even in the moſt barbarous manner: As for Inſtance, *Jebarku* (*a*). Moreover, by this means an infinite Number of Words, that really conſiſt of three, would neceſſarily be reduced to two, Syllables.

(3.) This Rule of *Gomarus* deſtroys another Principle of the *Hebrew* Grammar, *Scheva is pronounced under a Letter marked with a Dages.* For Example, in *Pakkedu*, where the *Dages* muſt either be taken away, or it muſt be ſhown how it is poſſible to pronounce the double Letter, if the *Scheva* is not heard.

(4.) *Cappel* obſerves, that where we read a *Scheva*, the Antients, as the *Seventy*, and St. *Jerom*, read ſometimes one Vowel, ſometimes another; which is a clear Evidence that we are not tied down ſo ſtrictly to that Vowel-Point, as *Gomarus* would have us, and that there is a Neceſſity of pronouncing it upon many Occaſions.

Another Principle laid down by *Gomarus*, is this, *There are no common Syllables in* Hebrew, *but all are long or ſhort; and the ſhort Syllables do not, as in* Greek *and* Latin, *become long by Poſition.* If the *Hebrew* Tongue was like the *Engliſh*, or moſt of the *European* Languages, where, in writing Verſes, no regard is had to the Quantity of the Syllables, this Rule of *Gomarus* might take place; but ſince he aſſerts that the *Hebrew*, *Greek*, and *Latin* Tongues reſemble one another, and that the Rules of their Poetry are very near the ſame, it is not to be conceived upon what Foundation he builds this Principle. He is no leſs unhappy in the Application of it, for he is plainly proved to relapſe into that Barbarouſneſs and Difficulty of Pronunciation ſo often objected to him. *Cappel* maintains, there is no diſtinguiſhing the ſhort from the long Syllables in *Hebrew*, as long as the true Pronunciation of them is not ſettled, and that it is impoſſible to read or pronounce the *Hebrew* Verſes according to the Rules of *Gomarus*. *Gomarus* acknowledges, that his Rules are never applicable to above two or three Verſes at a time of the ſame ſort. *Cappel* infers from this Confeſſion, that there can be no ſuch thing as fixing the Rules of the *Hebrew* Poetry, as it would be but loſt Labour to endeavour to lay down the Rules of the *Greek* and *Latin* Poetry, were there

(*a*) יברכו

in thoſe Languages no entire Pieces written in Verſes, that ſteadily obſerved the ſame Method and Rules. Would not a Man make himſelf ridiculous, if, upon finding a few irregular Verſes ſcattered up and down the Works of *Sophocles* and *Pindar*, he ſhould undertake to preſcribe Rules for a ſort of Poetry ſo uncertain, ſo immethodical?

Thus by confeſſing that all the *Hebrew* Verſes are of a different kind from one another, that they are intermixed without any Order or Method, *Varia*, *Promiſcua*, Απακτα; that they are independent, that is, have no manner of Relation to one another, and that few or none of the ſame ſort are to be found together; *Gomarus* undermines, before he is aware of it, the whole Deſign of his Book, ſince it is an impoſſible Thing to eſtabliſh Rules for a Poeſy ſo unſettled and unconfined. *Cappel* obſerves, that his Adverſary is obliged to ſuppoſe ſo great a Number of regular and irregular Verſes in the ſame Song or Hymn, that it would be impoſſible not to find the like every where, and that it would be full as eaſy to ſhew that the whole Bible is in Verſe, as it was for him to prove that the Pſalter only is ſo. In fine, he maintains, that by *Gomarus*'s Way and Method a Man might make it appear, that all the Orations of *Cicero* and *Demoſthenes*, that the Hiſtories of *Livy* and *Thucydides* are truly and really Poems; the Ridiculouſneſs of which Conſequences are ſufficient Proofs of the Falſeneſs of the Principles from whence they are drawn.

Pfeiffer (*a*) undertakes, by the help of *Gomarus*'s Rules, to put the *Pater-noſter* into Verſe; and to let us ſee that he undertook nothing but what he could perform, he has actually reduced the Lord's Prayer into ſeveral ſorts of Verſes, without changing ſo much as one Word.

The Author of the Bibliotheque Univerſelle.

The Author of the *Bibliotheque Univerſelle* has advanced a new Hypotheſis concerning the Poetry of the antient *Hebrews*; he will have it that their Verſes are in Ryme, and alledges theſe as the principal Reaſons of his Opinion: (1.) He obſerves, that the *Hebrew* Tongue will not, no more than the *French* or *Engliſh*, admit of thoſe Tranſpoſitions of the Words which the *Greeks* and *Latins* uſed both in their Proſe and Verſe. (2.) The *Hebrew* Nouns have the ſame Termination or Ending throughout all the Caſes of the Singular and Plural Numbers. In the

(*a*) Pfeiffer de Poeſi Hebræorum.

Plural

Plural the Maſculine Nouns end in *im*, and the Feminine in *oth*; this ſhows how eaſy it is to compoſe Verſes in that Language in Ryme, and how difficult to do it, as the *Greeks* and *Latins* did, in Meaſure. (3.) The *Hebrews* have a vaſt Number of long Syllables, and but very few ſhort ones; conſequently it would be a hard Matter to vary the Feet as often as is neceſſary to make good Verſes in imitation of the *Greeks* and *Latins*; on the contrary, Rymes are ſo ready at hand in *Hebrew*, that it is almoſt impoſſible to write without ryming, even when one leaſt deſigns it. (4.) This Author does not pretend to ſay, that the Poetry of the antient *Hebrews* was very regular and exact, he believes it was never reduced to any Rules of Art. Their Rymes are not always the moſt lucky, and there are ſeveral Paſſages in their Poems where there are no Rymes at all to be found: In all probability, ſays he, they did not regard theſe things equally at all times, but were ſatisfied now and then with the Cadence only. (5.) The Number of the Rymes is not fixed, there are ſometimes a great many of one ſort, and but few of another; the Order of the Rymes is not regulated, and the Length of the Verſes is ſtill leſs uniform: The *Hebrews*, ſays he, ſeem to have given themſelves little or no Trouble about theſe Matters. (6.) In their Rymes they had a greater regard to the Sound of the Words, and Likeneſs of the Cadence, than to a Similitude of Letters or Syllables. (7.) Poetical Licences, like thoſe in the Poetry of the *Greeks* and *Latins*, are to be obſerved in the Poetry of the *Hebrews*; they borrowed from the neighbouring Nations, *Chaldea* and *Arabia*, their Ways and Manners of Expreſſion, particularly in thoſe Places where the *Hebrew* Words would not have rymed, whereas thoſe they borrowed ryme perfectly well. (8.) Laſtly, a good Argument to induce us to believe that the *Hebrew* Verſes were writ in Ryme, is the little Trouble that is required to reduce into Ryme all the Songs, Hymns, and Poetical Works of Scripture. Accordingly this Author has publiſhed the Song of *Moſes* in Ryme, and aſſures us he has applied his Endeavours with Succeſs to the Pſalms, and reduced them into Ryme likewiſe. It muſt be noted, that there are Rymes in the Scene of *Plautus*'s *Pænulus*, written in the *Punic* Language. This laſt Proof is, without doubt, the beſt as well as the moſt proper to decide the Matter in queſtion; for if there are any conſtant, uniform,

and ſtudied Rymes to be plainly ſeen in the Poems of the *Hebrews*, it is very viſible that their Poetry is in Ryme. But in order to reduce into Ryme the Pſalms and Hymns of Scripture, this Author curtails, lengthens, and ſhortens the Verſes juſt as he thinks fit, without keeping any Proportion, or obſerving any Rule. By ſuch a Method as this, any one of *Cicero*'s Orations may be eaſily made to ryme.

It can't be denied but that there are Rymes, and ſometimes deſigned ones, in ſome Places of the Pſalms, and the other Poetical Works of Scripture; but it does not follow therefore that the Poetry of the antient *Hebrews* is in Ryme. The beſt way to know whether the *Hebrew* Verſes are in Ryme, is to pitch upon ſuch Verſes as plainly diſcover, by ſome Circumſtance, where they end exactly; which will be a means to prevent its being objected, that we cut off the Verſes where we pleaſe in order to make them ryme. The cxixth Pſalm is an Acroſtick, and therefore the Beginning and End of the Verſes are certainly known. This Pſalm is of a great Length, and nothing is more eaſy than to find out the Nature of the Verſes, by comparing them with one another. Now altho' we meet with a great many Rymes in this Pſalm, yet we can't be ſure they were intended or premeditated; they are neither conſtant nor uniform. We find ſometimes four or five Rymes one after another, then two or three, after that three or four Verſes without any Ryme at all, or a ſingle Verſe that does not ryme with any other. Can a Poem upon this Account be ſaid to be writ in Ryme? The *Lamentations* of *Jeremiah* are likewiſe Acroſtick Verſes, but I can find no regular or conſtant Rymes, nor any that can be ſaid to be deſigned or made on purpoſe. When two Verſes together end alike, we may be certain that it was the pure Effect of Chance.

The Truth of what has been ſaid, will appear more evident, if you caſt an Eye on the 3d Chapter of the *Lamentations*, where each Verſe begins with a Letter of the Alphabet, according to their natural Order; for in the firſt, ſecond, and fourth Chapters we are not ſo ſure where the Verſes end, becauſe there are more than two under the ſame Letter, which is placed only at the Beginning of the firſt Verſe. We find alſo in the *Song of Songs* ſome Rymes and agreeable Cadences, that, in all probability, were deſigned and intended; but they are neither uniform

nor

nor ſteady, nor to be met with every where throughout the whole Book. It is almoſt impoſſible, whether you deſign it or no, not to hit upon Rymes in *Hebrew*. I defy any Man, let him ſtudy to avoid it as much as he pleaſes, to talk to another Perſon in this Language, without falling into a Gingle of Words, or uſing Periods and Sentences which ſhall have the ſame Termination, by reaſon of the *Affixes* and the great Number of Words that end alike, as has been already obſerved. The cxith and cxiith Pſalms, which are likewiſe Acroſticks, are further Proofs of what I have advanced; there is not ſo much as one Ryme in them that we can be ſure of. But, however, we find there ſomewhat of Importance in relation to the Subject I am upon, namely, that the *Hebrews* had Verſes of different Lengths; for the Verſes in the cxixth Pſalm, and in the third Chapter of the *Lamentations*, are twice as long as thoſe in theſe two Pſalms: and it may be the *Hebrews* had Acroſtick Verſes, whoſe firſt Part to the Place where the Verſe breaks off, began with a Letter of the Alphabet; and the ſecond Part of the ſame Verſe, after the breaking off, began with the next Letter, according to the Order of the Alphabet; and this Notion ſeems to me to be the more juſt, becauſe the Senſe is ſuſpended where the Verſe breaks off, and is not compleated before the End of the ſecond Part of the Verſe: But wherever the Verſe is ſuppoſed to end, I am very well aſſured that no regular and ſettled Rymes can be found, from whence a Man may, with the leaſt colour of Reaſon, infer, that the Poetry of the antient *Hebrews* was in Ryme.

The Author's Opinion of this Matter.

After having examined theſe ſeveral Opinions, it remains now that I give my own Sentiments of the Matter under Conſideration. I take the Eſſence and Soul of Poetry to conſiſt in a lively, animated, affecting Manner of Diſcourſe, enriched with bold and ſurprizing Figures. I am of Opinion, that the Art of verſifying alone no more makes the Poet, than the Numbers and Meaſures make the Poetry. The Antients tell us, that *Plato*, *Florus*, and other Authors, compoſed Poetical Works in Proſe; and *Horace* ſays of himſelf, that his Verſes come nearer Proſe than Verſe; and *Quintilian* thought *Lucan* ought rather to be ranked among the Orators than the Poets.

Two ſorts of Poetry, natural and artificial.

Poetry may be diſtinguiſh'd into two ſorts, natural and artificial. Natural Poetry is as old as the firſt Man. Cool Reaſon and Judgment

Judgment ſpeak in direct and plain Terms, but Paſſion breaks out with Life and Spirit. Vehemence of Expreſſions, daring Figures, and Elevation of Thoughts, in proportion to the Grandeur and Quality of the Subject, make up what I call natural Poetry, which gave Being to methodical and artificial Poetry. This laſt paints the Paſſions and Sentiments in a ſtrong and pathetick manner, and this is common to it with natural Poetry; but then it repreſents them in ſelect ſtudied Terms, confined to a certain Meaſure and Cadence, and this diſtinguiſhes it from natural Poetry: So that it may be ſaid, artificial Poetry is the Art of painting the Paſſions with Study and Attention, but natural Poetry expreſſes them without any Art or Reflection.

Their Difference.

Each Nation, each Country, each Temper or Conſtitution, each Paſſion has its natural Rhetorick and Poetry. Indignation, Anger, Joy, Grief, Hatred, and Love always break forth with Energy and Force; Art and Reflection come not in till all is over. Nature furniſhes Art with all her Materials, and lays the Foundations of all her Improvements. As Poetry and Muſick were inſeparable among the Antients, who knew no Poet that was not at the ſame time Muſician too, and who called making Verſes, ſinging, and Verſes, Songs; what has been ſaid of Poetry may likewiſe be applied to Muſick. There is a natural Muſick which preceded and gave birth to the artificial: Both tend to the ſame end, namely, to expreſs the Sentiments of the Poet in ſuch Sounds and Terms, as have a Correſpondence to what he feels within himſelf, and would inſpire others with.

Some Remains of the antient natural Poetry.

We may obſerve, long before the time of *Moſes*, ſome Remains of the antient natural Poetry in *Lamech*'s Diſcourſe to his two Wives (*a*), in *Noah*'s bleſſing *Shem* and *Japheth*, and curſing *Canaan* (*b*); in *Jacob*'s laſt Words to his Sons upon his Death-Bed (*c*); in the Book of *Job*, ſuppoſing it to have been written before *Moſes* lived. All theſe Things are poetical, and are ſo many Proofs of the Antiquity of this natural Poetry I am ſpeaking of, which conſiſted altogether in the Style, and not at all in the Meaſure of the Syllables. The whole was nothing elſe but figurative, ſublime, and ſententious Expreſſions, wherein they generally affected a kind of Repetition of the ſame

(*a*) Gen. iv. 23, 24.
(*b*) Gen. ix. 25, 26, 27.
(*c*) Gen. lxix.

thing

thing in different Terms, in the two Parts of the ſame Sentence, and ſometimes we find a ſort of Ryme and Cadence, which are ſo obvious and remarkable, that we need not be at much pains to diſcover them.

This was the Nature of the Poetry of the Antients before the Invention of artificial and methodical Poetry was found out. The *Greeks*, even after the Times of *Heſiod* and *Homer*, had not entirely loſt the Notion and Uſe of natural Poetry. *Demoſthenes* (*a*) very rightly diſtinguiſhes the Poets who obſerved the Rules of Art, from thoſe who writ what they call *Adomena*, or Songs. *Diogenes Laertius* (*b*) calls by the ſame Name the *Sayings* he attributes to the Wiſemen of *Greece*; and *Caſaubon* makes no doubt but that they were Remains of the antient Poetry in uſe before *Homer*. St. *Clement* of (*c*) *Alexandria* compares the *Hebrew* Pſalms, as to the Meaſure and Style, to certain Hymns termed *Scolia* among the *Greeks*, which they were wont to ſing at their Feaſts. They were looſe and irregular Verſes, wherein, without having any regard to the Meaſure of the Feet, and Quantity of the Syllables, they expreſſed their Thoughts in a lively and conciſe manner. There are Inſtances in *Athenæus* (*d*) of this free and unconfined way of writing; but, in proceſs of Time, they made uſe of greater Art, and a more regular Method.

The Nature of the Hebrew Poetry.

Such, in my Opinion, was the Poetry of the antient *Hebrews*, without Art or Study they imitated Nature, and expreſſed her Motions and Sentiments. They ſpoke and wrote in a ſo much more enlivened and emphatical manner, as their Thoughts were not ſuffered to grow cool by Reflection and Study. In all their Ways of Diſcourſe, in their Poems, their Narratives, their Invectives, their Exhortations, their Inſtructions, their Hymns, you meet with nothing that is far-fetched or affected; which is the Reaſon of their being ſo animated, ſo moving, ſo natural, ſo beautiful.

It was always the ſame.

It does not appear that the Poetry of the *Hebrews* ever underwent any Change: We find it the ſame in the time of *David*, of *Iſaiah*, of *Jeremiah*, and of *Daniel* as it was in the

(*a*) Apud Caſaub. in Laert. l. 1.
(*b*) Diog. Laert. in Vit. ſept. Sapient.
(*c*) Clem. Alex. Pedag. l. 2.
(*d*) Athenæus, l. 10. c. 14. Dipnoſoph.

time

time of *Moſes*; and the Hymns or Songs in the New Teſtament are of the ſame nature with thoſe in the Old. Is it poſſible that a methodical and artificial Poetry ſhould be thus of the ſame Style and Nature, ſhould keep exactly to the ſame manner of writing, and to the ſame Rules, without any Additions or Diminutions, for the Space of above a thouſand Years?

No artificial Poetry when Moſes writ.

When *Moſes* writ, moſt certainly there was then no Poetry reduced to the Rules of Art in any Part of the World that we know of. The *Chaldeans* and *Egyptians*, the moſt antient Nations among whom Literature was cultivated, don't ſeem to have had the leaſt Knowledge of a Poetry confined to a certain Number of Feet, and a certain Quantity of long or ſhort Syllables, or that conſiſted of uniform and regular Rymes.

The moſt antient Verſes of the Eaſtern *Writers.*

As to the Buſineſs of Verſes, the moſt antient we have of the *Eaſtern* Writers came from the *Arabians*. Some of their Poets lived before *Mahomet*, and are like thoſe of the preſent Age as to Rymes; they make no Diſtinction between long and ſhort Syllables. It is reported that *Harmonius*, the Son of *Bardeſanes*, in the ſecond Century of the Church, compoſed muſical Airs and Verſes in the *Syriack* Tongue, in imitation of the *Greeks*. But what is all this to our purpoſe? how modern are theſe things when compared to the Time of *Moſes*? The *Greeks* have no Poem of an older Date than thoſe of *Homer* and *Heſiod* who lived above ſix hundred Years after *Moſes*? What Man therefore, when he conſiders theſe things, can believe that the Lawgiver of the *Hebrews*, that *Job*, that *David* obſerved the Rules of an artificial and methodical Poetry, or that the Art of Poetry was arrived to Perfection among the *Hebrews* ſo many Ages before any other Nation had the leaſt Intimation of any ſuch thing?

Had the Poetry of the Hebrews *been artificial, it would be as viſible now as heretofore.*

Beſides, Had the Poetry of the Antient *Hebrews* been reduced to any Rules of Art, would theſe Rules be intirely unknown, now that the Oriental Languages are ſo throughly and ſucceſsfully ſtudied? If there were Heroic Verſes in *Moſes*, in *Job*, and in the Pſalter, would they not be as viſible to us at preſent, as they were to thoſe Authors who fancied they ſaw them there heretofore? If theſe Verſes had any Uniformity, or Regularity in their Meaſures, in their Forms, and in their Cadences, is it poſſible that no Man ſhou'd have had the leaſt Glimpſe of them to this very day? Would the Authors of theſe Sacred

Sacred Poems never have made uſe of any Term of Art? Would not ſome one or other have prefix'd before the Pſalm or Hymn he had compos'd, the Meaſure of the Verſes, as we find they frequently give us the Name of the Muſician by whom it was to be ſung, or the Inſtrument on which it was to be play'd?

Other Proofs againſt the Hebrew *Poetry's being artificial.*

The Manner in which the Songs or Hymns of Scripture were compoſed, affords another good Proof againſt their Opinion, who hold, that they were made according to Art and the Rules of a methodical Poeſy. Theſe Songs, for the moſt part, were extemporary Productions, and the ſudden Effects of a divine and ſupernatural Impulſe. Now a Piece of artificial Poetry is incapable of being produced thus on a ſudden without any Premeditation; and the divine Impulſe, or Inſpiration, allows no time to reflect on the Rules of Art.

Your common Poets, in order to compoſe, ſtand in need of a certain *Fire* of Imagination, which they term Rapture; but this *Fire* or *Heat* of Fancy furniſhes only the Thoughts and Flights, it is the Buſineſs of Art to range and diſpoſe the Words, and this Diſpoſition is made at leiſure, and with Deliberation. But we find not the leaſt Footſteps of this artful ranging of the Words in the Sacred Writers; they ſpeak all on a ſudden, and in the midſt of Hurry and Tumult. *Moſes* immediately, upon the Paſſage thro' the *Red-Sea*, breaks out into the Song that gave Occaſion to our preſent Inquiries. *David* compoſed ſeveral of his Pſalms in the midſt of the greateſt Straits and Difficulties, and in Circumſtances wherein it would have been a very hard matter for him to have been Maſter of ſo much Preſence of Mind, as the Attention to the Rules of an artificial Poetry requires.

The Hymns or Songs, I am ſpeaking of, were many times compoſed by Women or illiterate Men, whoſe Tongues were made uſe of but as mere Inſtruments or *Organs* by the Spirit of God. Will any one ſay, that ſuch Perſons commenced Poets on a ſudden, and uttered Poems in Ryme, or made according to the Rules of the Art of Poetry? *Anna*, the Mother of *Samuel*, *Deborah*, *Judith*, *Tobias*, the Bleſſed Virgin, *Zacharias*, *Simeon* compoſed their Songs *extempore*, without any Premeditation or Study: Their Poetry therefore, conſidered in itſelf, was entirely natural, tho' with reſpect to the Spirit of God, who was the Author of it, it was of a ſupernatural Order,

infinitely above all humane Art or Contrivance. Let them ſhow us wherein the Difference lies between the Hymns or Songs compoſed by theſe Perſons, who never applied themſelves to Learning, and thoſe of *Moſes*, *David*, *Iſaiah*, who were all Men of Letters, and could not have been ignorant of the Rules of Poetry, ſuppoſing there had been any ſuch in their Times: But if they can find no manner of Difference or Diſtinction between theſe ſeveral Poems, as to their Form or Art, they muſt be forced to own that the Poetry was purely natural; for the Inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt cauſes no Change in the natural or acquired Habits of thoſe who are inſpired. Their Minds are raiſed, illuminated, enlivened: But as he, who was eloquent before he was inſpired, maintains the ſame Character after his Inſpiration; ſo thoſe, whoſe Underſtandings were leſs cultivated and improved, become not afterwards more knowing in *Sciences* purely human, as is the Art of Poetry.

But as for the Style, and thoſe enliven'd, ſurprizing, figurative, and ſublime Expreſſions to be met with in the Hymns and Songs of Scripture, it is no difficult Matter for Perſons, without any previous Study or Art, but tranſported with a Divine Impulſe, to break out into Poetical Forms of Speech. As this Style was very agreeable to the Genius of the *Eaſtern* People, and a way of Expreſſion they naturally affected, it is the leſs to be wondered at, that they ſhould on a ſudden, without any Premeditation, expreſs themſelves in this manner, and continue to do ſo for ſo many Ages together.

Poetry, confined to Method and Rules, muſt needs be cramp'd and fetter'd; and the unavoidable Neceſſity one lies under of tranſpoſing the Words, in order to come at the Meaſures of the Verſes, obliges one to ſtuff a Poem with *Epithets*, and obſolete Terms and Phraſes: Very often we muſt give the Thought an affected Turn, eſpecially when we write in haſte, and without taking a great deal of Time and Pains. Now, in the Verſes of the *Hebrews*, we obſerve none of theſe Tranſpoſitions, nay their Language will not bear them, we don't find that Number of *Epithets* to ſpin out the Verſe, nor thoſe affected Turns, which, for the ſake of the Meaſure, are neceſſarily made uſe of in artificial Poetry, and in the Poems of the *Greeks* and *Latins*. If we meet with ſome Terms that are not ſo commonly uſed, it is becauſe the animated, ſublime, and pathetick

thetick Style of the Psalms and Hymns require uncommon and pompous Expressions. These give a Majesty and Weight to the Discourse, and perhaps were designed likewise to facilitate the Pronunciation and Singing, and to make the Verses run the smoother, rather than upon account of the Feet or Measures.

Had the Poetry of the *Hebrews* been like that of the *Greeks*, they would not have fail'd of taking notice of the Art of it, and laying down its Rules and Methods. It is not probable that they would have entirely neglected an Invention of such Importance, or that no one, either out of Curiosity, or Interest, or Inclination, should ever take it in his head to write upon this Subject, and make a Collection of the Rules and Precepts of the Art of Poetry. But we don't find one single Word in the Language of the *Hebrews*, or in their whole History, which so much as intimates to us, that there ever were any professed Poets among them: Not but that they writ Songs or Hymns a long while after the Art of Poetry was invented in *Greece*. These Songs don't seem at all to differ from those of *Moses* and *David*; both the one and the other were composed in order to be sung, as was all the Poetry of the antient *Greeks* and *Latins*: but with this Difference, that among these last the Air or Tune of the Verses was fixed and ascertained by their Measure and Cadence, whereas among the *Hebrews* almost all the Songs might be sung to all sorts of Tunes; as in Church-Musick different Psalms are sung to what Tune is judged most proper. The Manner in which the *Jews* sing and read the Holy Bible in their Synagogue, is no modern Invention, since the musical Accents in the Text, which show when the Voice in singing is to be raised or fallen, are themselves of very great Antiquity; and the steady Adherence of the *Jews* to Ceremonies and Practices so little troublesome as this, is a farther Reason to induce us to believe, that their Manner of Singing came to them from the Antients. And as their Musick is applicable not only to the Verses of an artificial Poesy, but likewise to Poems composed without any Rules of Art, and even to mere Prose, it plainly follows, that nothing can be inferred in favour of Ryme or Measure in the Verses of the *Hebrews*, from their being sung heretofore at religious Festivals, or Times of publick Rejoicings.

It is then very credible, that the Poetry of the antient *Hebrews* conſiſted wholly in the Grandeur, Nobleneſs, and Sublimity of the Thoughts and Style, in the Daringneſs of the Figures, in lively and pathetick Expreſſions, in a brief and conciſe manner of Diſcourſe, in a Turn more florid, more enlivened, more expreſſive, more proper to paint and diſplay the Images of Things before our Eyes, than the common Forms of Speech: that their Poems were the Productions of a happy Genius, animated and inſpired by the Spirit of God, which being carried, by the Divine Impulſe, above the Reſtraint of the Rules of a methodical Poetry, expreſſed its Thoughts and Sentiments in a ſublime and poetical manner. The *Hebrews* were never very fond of Novelty, nor were they of ſo nice a Taſte as the *Greeks* and *Romans*: but ſatisfied with their antient Poetry and Muſick, which was grave, ſolemn, affecting, agreeable, and ſeldom made uſe of but in religious Matters; they took no Pains to poliſh and refine them.

BIBLIOTECA